

# Bedford emergency call centre closure 'a potential threat to public safety'



The East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust (EEAST) has reconfirmed its intention to close the Bedford Emergency Operations Centre (EOC), which could place significant strain on ambulance cover across the East of England and leave a large number of staff out of a job.

Despite a short reprieve for the EOC in February, when the Trust's Board rejected the closure plans, it is now slated for closure in the next 12 to 18 months.



The EOC centre staff have been told to either relocate to the more expensive areas of Chelmsford or Norwich, secure another role within the Trust, or find themselves made redundant.

The possible impact on patient safety is of grave concern, as two EOCs will be left to manage ambulance provision for an area encompassing six counties, four major airports, and several large towns and cities.

EEAST is currently subject to a written warning from the CQC over failures including staffing levels and call wait times.

**Donna Thomas, GMB Regional Organiser, said:**

“This closure would have a serious knock-on effect for ambulance cover across the region.

“It represents a potential threat to public safety, particularly as the Trust is already failing on call wait times.

“We are deeply concerned about the impact it could have on our members, who will be faced with the difficult choice to either relocate, redeploy, or find themselves out of work.”

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